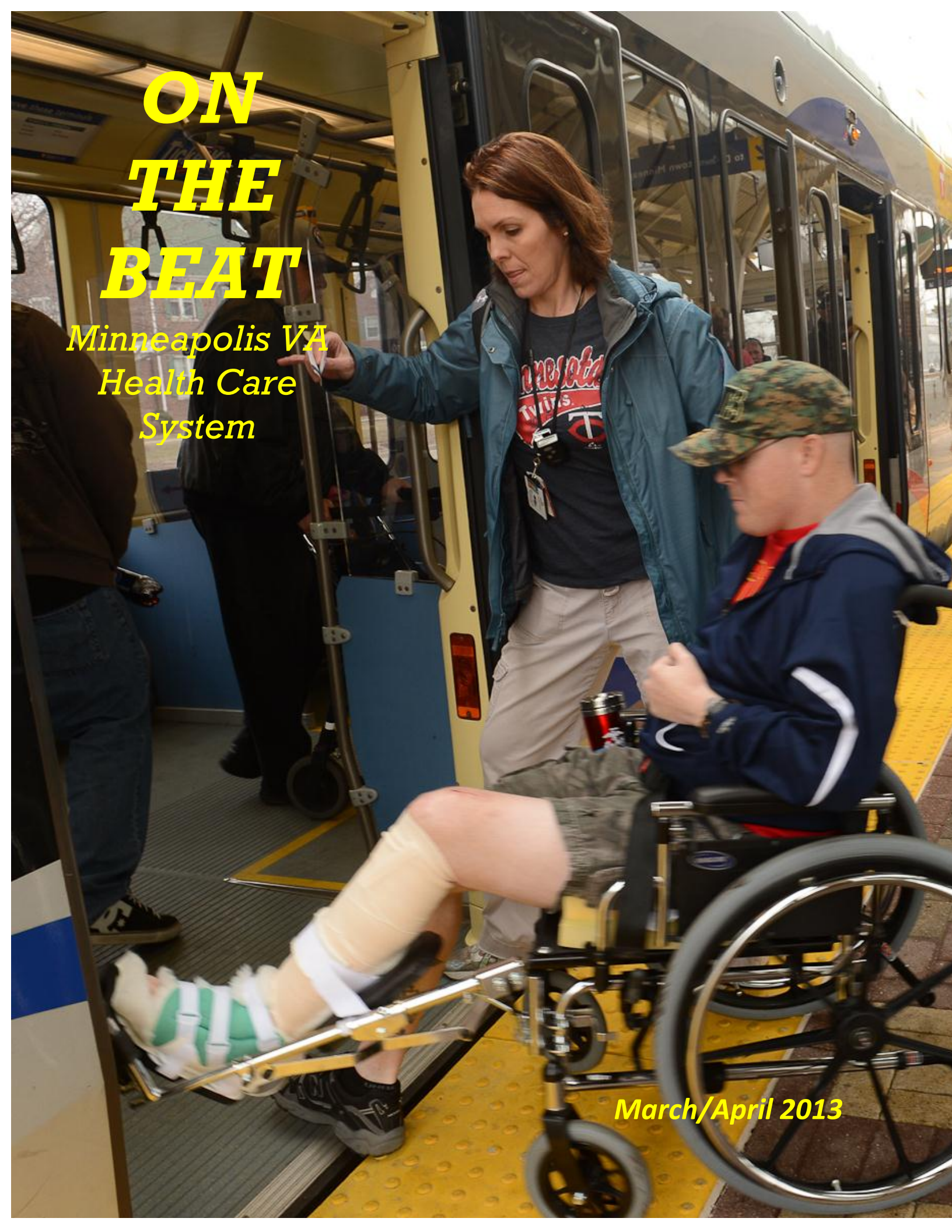


ON THE BEAT

*Minneapolis VA
Health Care
System*

March/April 2013





'First Impressions' Coming Soon

The Visitor's Entrance and first floor Flag Atrium will be undergoing a major renovation to begin in next few months. The project will include a driver's lounge (currently on 2nd floor), information kiosks, welcome desk and a new access to the cafeteria. The American flag, one of the hallmarks of the Minneapolis VA, will remain. The revolving door at the entry area will be changed. The new design will relieve congestion at the Outpatient Entrance.

SW Metro CBOC Slated for 2014

A pre-solicitation notice has been posted on www.fbo.gov for a community-based outpatient clinic (CBOC) to be located in Scott, Carver or McLeod counties, located SW of Minneapolis.

Previously, the government announced plans for a CBOC in the southern border area of the state located in any of the following counties; Faribault, Freeborn, Mower or Waseca County.

Both will be contract operations tentatively scheduled to open in 2014. Minneapolis VA currently runs 11 CBOCs or satellite clinics in Minnesota and Western Wisconsin.

Nearly 50% of primary care patients are now seen in CBOCs.

VA Clinic Remains in Hibbing; New Clinic to Open in Ely in Summer 2013

The VA announced in late March that Sterling Medical Associates of Cincinnati, Ohio, has been awarded a five-year contract to operate a Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Hibbing, Minn., and an outreach clinic in Ely, Minn. VA has notified the current CBOC contractor, Health Net Federal Services of Rancho Cordova, Calif., that the new contract has been awarded to Sterling Medical Associates. VA has operated a CBOC in Hibbing since 1998 and a satellite clinic in the Cook Hospital for the past two years. The Cook clinic will relocate to Ely under the new contract. The Hibbing CBOC under Sterling Medical will be located in the Iron Gate Plaza, 990 West 41st St., Suite 5. It will be open Monday-Friday. The new Ely Outreach Clinic will be located at 720 Miners Drive, Ely, MN. It will be open 2-3 days per week. The new clinics are expected to open in summer 2013. There will be no interruption of services to Veterans. VA demographic data show a larger number of Veterans living in the Ely area. The VA sees this as an opportunity to reach out to a large Veteran population. More than 3,000 Veterans are currently enrolled in care through the Hibbing CBOC. Sterling Medical currently operates 17 CBOCs nationwide, including clinics in Mankato and St. James.



ON THE COVER: Recreation Therapist Kristin Powell and OEF/OIF veteran Dan Stewart board light rail for trip to Target Field. See story and more photos on Page 5.

400 VETERANS AND FRIENDS DEDICATE FACILITY

Maplewood CBOC In a New Home



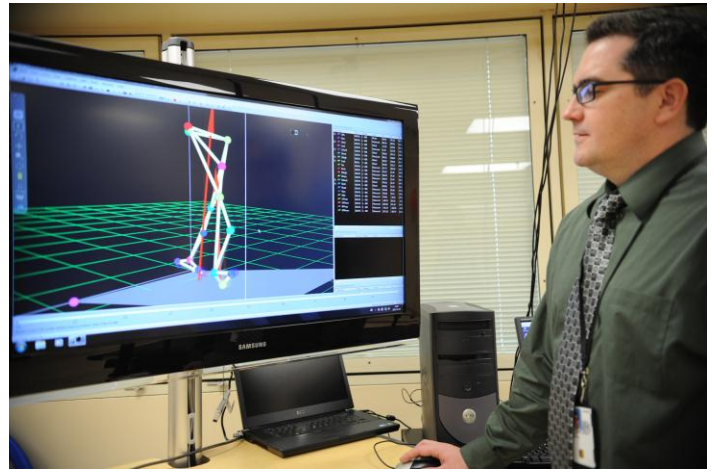
More than 400 Veterans and friends attended the March 15 dedication of the new building for the Maplewood Community-based outpatient clinic. In upper right photo, Acting director Judith Johnson-Mekota of the Minneapolis VA Health Care System gives remarks. In lower left photo: Connie Bengston, RN, OEF/OIF Coordinator for Maplewood; Travis Mortenson, ADPAC; Elizabeth Welch, Pharmacist; and Katie Polzin, LPN. In lower right photo, Radiology tech Jesse Wollack explains equipment to guests. The clinic, located at 1725 Legacy Parkway East, is three times the size of the old clinic on White Bear Avenue, which had been used since 1999. Services at the Maplewood clinic include primary care, mental health, audiology, telemedicine and x-ray.



RESEARCH NEWS

These Feet Are Made For Walking

If you've ever seen ads for the "rocker" shoes that have become so popular in many circles due to their purported body toning properties, you might understand a bit about the sort of work done by **Andrew Hansen, Ph.D.**, a biomedical engineer and research health scientist at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System.

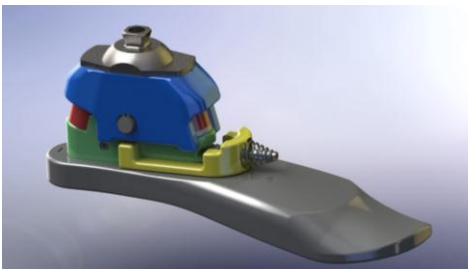


Dr. Hansen will present at VA Research Week Grand Rounds on May 17, at noon in the auditorium.

In Hansen's lab, there are shelves of prosthetic feet of various shapes, sizes and materials. Some are of a very basic design, made of hard plastic and meant to be quite inexpensive. Others are constructed of more flexible material and are cut at precise intervals to help enable more movement, including the "rocking" motion that natural ankles and feet actually do make when we walk and the "flat" state that occurs when we are standing still. Still others are operated by remote control fobs that mechanically change the prosthetic from the rocking, or walking state, to the flat, standing still state.

In all of the studies and trials Hansen and his two research engineers and changing cadre of University of Minnesota mechanical engineering students are engaged in, the overriding goal remains the same. For Hansen, that aim is "to try and replicate what is lost, even though it is still not easy to develop a prosthetic foot and ankle that exactly mimics natural walking."

When thinking of prosthetic limbs, many people think of the devices used by civilians and veterans who have lost their legs and want to remain as active as possible. Many of these people, including a good many veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, are quite young and were extremely physically active, and even athletically competitive, before they lost their legs.



But the veterans Hansen and his colleagues are working to help are usually much older, and have lost a foot or even both feet, not to war injuries, but to disorders such as diabetes and peripheral vascular disease (also known as peripheral arterial disease, which involves the obstruction of arteries not found in the heart or brain). These veterans don't want to compete in the Olympics; they just want to be able to walk again in as normal of a fashion as possible.

Another future trial, which Hansen hopes to obtain funding for from commercial partners and other nonprofit and private sources, will involve a more sophisticated "bimodal" ankle. This is the prosthesis that is currently controlled by the remote control fob. Hansen developed the idea while at Northwestern University (where he still is an adjunct associate professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation) and only fully developed the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Twins Open Stadium for Tour by VA Patients and Staff



On Monday April 8 a group of over 40 Veterans, caregivers, volunteers and Recreation Therapy staff boarded the light rail toward downtown Minneapolis for a tour of the Minnesota Twins stadium. This is the third year in a row Veterans receiving care at MVAHCS have had the opportunity to tour the stadium and see it up close. Patients were able to go “behind-the-scenes” and see most areas of the building including; the Champions club, the visiting team’s locker room, and the press box, which offered a spectacular view of the entire field. Everyone was treated to Twins facts, figures and years of historical memorabilia along the way as well.



Congratulations!

35 Years Mary Mele Primary Care Mary Edison Specialty Care Leeann McDonald Specialty Care	Peggy Shepard Pathology & Lab Stacia Wotring Primary Care Diane Maloney Primary Care Wendy Anderson Pharmacy Service	Kevin Upham Human Resources Catherine Kotz Extended Care Adrienne R Kaplan Patient Care John T Hansen Pharmacy Steven Leisz Environmental Health Beret Anne Skroch Mental Health Duwayne Bland Engineering Patricia Hagen Extended Care Anne Bateman Extended Care	Jeffrey Tipple Police Service Alma Hannah Extended Care Deborah Rogers Extended Care Ennir Emerson Pharmacy Service Michael Schad VISN Directors Office Donna Young Specialty Care Lucille Notermann Pharmacy Carolyn Konate Specialty Care Tommy Watson Engineering Kyle Stensrud Engineering
30 Years Brian Westphal Business & Operations Thomas Novotny Administrative Services Ellen Bailey Business & Operations Kathryn Furst-Mickle Environmental Health Beth A Gustafson Office Of Director Sharon Myllenbeck Primary Care Jana Bonawitz-Conlin Specialty	Kye Grundyson Primary Care Nancy Hildreth, Extended Care Ramona J Sutherland Specialty Care Timothy Nemzek Specialty Care Lawrence Mctighe Specialty Care Terry Johnson Engineering Dana Hazel Mental Health Wilbert J Keller VISN	Mary Herman Pharmacy Becky Amborn Mental Health Ansar Azber, MD Primary Care Lynn Peterka Pharmacy Lynn Catlin-Ensor Primary Care Mark Dobias Biomedical Engineering	Gordon Scott Business & Operations Frank Lay Environmental Health Denise Havlik-Jensen Primary Care
25 Years Dale Boeff Research Ann Johnson Mental Health Patricia Calkins Primary Care Barbara Winge Education	20 Years Catherine Aljets Mental/Behavioral Lisa McGuire VISN Directors Office 15 Years Mary Schlueter Primary Care		



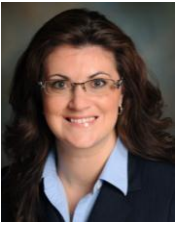
Emergency Management Coordinator Jonathon Johnson Explains New VA Alert System

Minneapolis VAHCS Employee Spring Forums

An estimated 300 staff turned out for three employee forums April 8-10. Here are some of the highlights:

- Minneapolis VA will surpass 100,000 unique patients in 2013.
- Chief Financial Officer LeAnn Stomberg said the budget has kept pace with increased patient load; 2013 budget is approximately \$600 million.
- Joint Commission Survey can happen anytime – and definitely before July 2013. The Continuous Improvement department has brochures and posters. Make sure you have the 2013 poster in your clinic or administrative area.
- The search for a permanent director continues.
- Engineering Chief Steve Challeen thanked staff for patience during parking garage construction.
- He announced plans for hybrid Operating Room, revamped eye clinic, a “model” inpatient ward and a special MOHS clinic for dermatology procedures.
- Acting Director Judith Johnson-Mekota outlined the three key themes of the Strategic Plan: Courtesy & Compassion, headed by Nurse Executive Helen Pearlman; Honoring Our Commitments, headed by Chief of Staff Kent Crossley, MD; and an Agile Health Care System, headed by Associate Director Erik Stalhandske. For details, see MVAHCS Strategic Goals FY13-14 Employee Forum on the Q:drive/Public Affairs.
- Biomedical Engineering is looking at a system for public Wi-Fi in the medical center. It will not be available in all parts of the facility, however.
- The Compensation & Pension (C&P) evaluation clinic located on the third floor will be moving to the Whipple Federal Building. The new Pain Center will be located in the current C&P area.
- An Emergency Call-Back system has been instituted to help alert employees in the event of a disaster. It is similar to systems used by school systems to notify parents when there is a snow emergency.

VA STAFF NEWSMAKERS



Martina Bucci Named Chief of Prosthetics Service Ms. Bucci joined the Minneapolis VA in September of 2007. She has served in various positions within the Prosthetics Service Line, including Purchasing Agent, TCF Intern, and most recently as the Supervisor of the Administrative Section. Currently, she is detailed to the Director's Office as the Project Manager for the affiliate contract project with the University of Minnesota Physicians group. Ms. Bucci is currently a member of the National Prosthetics Preceptor Team and mentors a local TCF intern. Ms. Bucci holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Maryland in Business Administration and a Master's of Public Administration from Metropolitan State University.

Sara Otterness Receives 2012 Hands and Heart Award Sara is a nurse practitioner and clinic director of the renal dialysis unit. She received the Minneapolis VA Hands and Heart award at the Medical Center Leadership meeting on March 21. A letter from VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert Petzel said: "This award recognizes you as a compassionate individual whose dedication to Veterans is marked by the highest standards in patient care." Ms. Otterness said: "I am very honored to be the recipient."



Bridget Moore, MSA, Outpatient Surgery, Customer Service Award - "Bridget shines in her interactions with patients. Many patients she serves remember her name and face, greeting her upon return visits. She consistently provides caring and individual attention to customers in a dignified, civil and respectful manner. She is dependable, competent, and extremely knowledgeable about the hospital and its wide range of clinics and services. Her competence shines through in her positive attitude with her patients and in her encounters with others throughout her day. Bridget's customer service is not only directed toward patients but also to her fellow co-workers, as evidenced by the large number of staff who know her and smile and/or wave to her as she moves through the work area and building during her work. She has been asked to train new MSAs in the past and there is no one better to model the best in customer service to new employees. She is professional in her appearance, maintains a positive attitude and has the ability to maintain her composure during stressful and busy days. She has a strong desire to provide excellence in all that she does and is deserving of winning this award."

Wendy Johnson-Wolf, MSA, Primary Care, Customer Service Award "Wendy Johnson-Wolf is helpful, thoughtful and genuine with each patient. The amount of respect she gives to everyone is so inspiring. She is very knowledgeable about her role, multitasking with a calmness and a smile, handling check ins, check outs, setting up lab appointments, CT appointments all while managing the ringing phones and processing the STAT and the ASAP orders. For patients and staff that aren't so friendly, she always remains very calm, respectful and works on finding a solution. She is courteous with other MSAs, checking in with everyone before she goes to lunch and making sure everyone gets to lunch. She is the social coordinator on 4F, as she believes that staff parties and getting to know everyone that we work with is very important as well as it makes going to work more fun. She gives her all for everything she does for patients and staff, and she does it very well! Wendy Johnson-Wolf is the best customer service employee ever seen."



Anna Pratt, Tele-Health Clinical Technician at the Rochester CBOC, has been accepted into membership into Phi Theta Kappa National Honor Society for outstanding academic achievement.



VA Staff Recycle Old Electronics For Earth Day

On April 16, more than 110 VA staff and volunteers collected over 7500 pounds of electronics for recycling as part of an effort with "Tech Dump." "The event was a huge success," said Minneapolis VA GEMS Coordinator George Johnson. "The items will be sustainably recycled and create high technology, living wage, local jobs. The most commonly asked question was: 'When can we do this again?'"

Study Supports Veterans Court in Hennepin A study by Hennepin County Research Division has found that the County's Veterans Court – the first in Minnesota – has successfully helped veterans with addiction and mental illness. The court was established in July 2012. Of 131 defendants accepted into the legal program 2010 to 2012, 83 percent committed fewer offenses after six months in the program as compared with the six months before entering, the study found. The majority of participants are men; two-thirds are white and nearly half have been deployed overseas at least once. Graduates spend an average of 14 months in Veterans Court and make an average of nine appearances. About three-fourths of graduates have no new offenses at six, 12 and 18 months after entering the program. At 24 months, 56 percent still have not reoffended. The Minneapolis VA supports the program with an on-site social worker who attends all court sessions.



Ramp Construction Updates on Internet

Work began April 1 and will require 18 months to complete. The facility lost 233 surface spaces in the construction zone. The ramp will provide 520 parking spots in front of the main medical center with four levels of parking, elevator and sidewalk to Building 70 Outpatient Entrance. Patients and visitors are encouraged to use Lot 6, which is on the south side of One Veterans Drive. If the lot is full, there is open/overflow parking in several lots toward 54th

Street on the north side of campus. County Service van and Volunteer parking will not change during construction. For updates, see Internet site at: www.startribune.com/local/minneapolis/203614251.html



"On the Beat" is published bi-monthly for patients, employees, volunteers and friends of the Minneapolis VA Health Care System.

Comments:

Public Affairs Office, 4V-106
Minneapolis VAMC
One Veterans Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55417

Connect with us on:

www.minneapolis.va.gov



VA
HEALTH CARE | Defining
EXCELLENCE
in the 21st Century

Email Updates

You can sign up to receive regular news and announcements through Gov Delivery. Go to the website and enter your email address.



Email Updates

Prosthetics Research - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

prosthesis prototype last year. He hopes that this prosthesis will be able to provide the right amount of flexibility to better mimic the walking and standing modes of able-bodied people. In doing so, the device may improve the user's confidence in their balance and encourage them to be involved in more activities.

One other project of Hansen and his colleagues doesn't involve prosthetics at all, but can be a big help to people who have lost foot sensation due to diabetes, peripheral vascular disease or other disorders.

Many of these people use mirrors to try and examine the soles of their feet for sores and skin depletion that are signs of foot sensation loss that can lead to foot amputation. Instead of relying on mirrors (which can be difficult to manipulate, and sometimes nearly useless for people who also may have vision difficulties that come with diseases such as diabetes), the person puts their leg in a holder and a camera (or a camera-equipped smartphone) is fitted at the end to meet with the foot's sole.

A photo can be taken and sent to a nurse or a physician who then can have a much more accurate description of the actual foot condition. Hansen thinks this deceptively simple device can be of tremendous benefit to people who may have trouble precisely discerning the state of their foot condition.

"Because we don't want to just keep developing prosthetics," he said. "We also want to do what we can to help people keep their natural feet and ankles, for as long as possible, and in as workable a condition as possible."

The article was published on the Minnesota Veterans Medical Research & Education Foundation website. www.MNVets.org It is reprinted with permission.

